(c) by when hundred per cent population of the above districts would be covered by mobile telephone services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has planned for installation of mobile base stations in Almora, Pithoragarh and Champawat districts of Uttarakhand during the year 2007-08. Details are as follows:-

1. Almora (16 towers) : Almora (3 towers), Amyariband, Bhanoti, Daula, Deghat, Dewal, Dol, Kausani, Mallimarai, Nail, Naugaon, Ranikhet (2 towers), Tarikhet.

2 Champawat (4 towers): Barkot, Champawat, Lohaghat, Ritha.

3. Pithoragarh (10 towers): Baram, Berinag, Dedihat, Munsyari, Pithoragarh (4 towers), Tallimirthi, Toli.

(b) Presently approx 15.77% population of Almora district, 5.37% population of Champawat district and 16.76% population of Pithoragarh district is utilizing mobile telephone services. After installation of towers mentioned in para (a) above, approx 18.12% population of Almora district, 6.97% population of Champawat district and 17.96% population of Pithoragarh district will be in a position to utilize the mobile telephone services in the Uttarakhand State.

(c) Having provided reach of its mobile network up to significant number of Tehsil and Block Headquarters, BSNL has now planned to expand its mobile network across the country including Uttarakhand progressively to cover villages having population greater than 1000 during the next three phases depending upon techno-commercial feasibility.

Rural direct exchange lines

†1861. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been signed between telephone operators for Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs);

(b) if so, the names of such telephone operators;

(c) whether any provision has made regarding giving subsidy to telephone operators for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the basis upon which this subsidy would be given?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Reliance Infocomm Limited (RIL), Tata Teleservices Limited (TTL) and Tata Teleservices Limited (Maharashtra) (TTL-MH) for provision of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

individual Rural Household Direct Exchange lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country during the period 01.04.2005 and 31.03.2007.

(c) Out of a total of 2,647 SDCAs in the country, 1,685 SDCAs were identified for providing subsidy support, where the cost of providing RDELs was more than the revenue earned. The mode of subsidy was based on a front loaded payment and equated annual subsidy installments.

Waiting list for cellular connections

1862. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is long waiting list before BSNL for cellular connections;

(b) if so, the details thereof, circle-wise, till date;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this long waiting list is because of lack of handsets with the BSNL; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to resolve this and provide connections to the subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, BSNL has a waiting list of 10,283 Cellular mobile connections as on 31st July, 2007 in North East-II Telecom Circle comprising of Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh States.

(c) No, Sir. The waiting list in North East-II Telecom Circle is due to non-availability of additional equipment capacity.

(d) BSNL has ordered GSM equipment for capacity addition of 80,000 lines in North East-II Circle to wipe out the long waiting list and to provide new connections. An Advance Purchase Order (APO) has already been issued to one of the successful bidder on 18.07.07. Unconditional acceptance of the APO will establish the price to enable issue of APO to other successful bidder. This will enable BSNL to provide more new connections to the subscribers.

Increasing subscriber base of BSNL

1863. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TEGHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of cellular subscriber base of BSNL *vis-a-vis* the major private operators between June 2004-July 2007;

(b) whether it is a fact that the BSNL subscriber base is dwindling over the period; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the corrective measures taken by Government?